United Nations S/2018/231

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 March 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 16 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

For years, civilians have been starved, used as human shields and denied humanitarian assistance, all the while being deceitfully and hypocritically invoked as a pretext before the international community. In recent days, in the eastern Ghutah, the Syrian Arab Republic has lifted the lid on the greatest instance of mendacity and guile perpetrated by the armed terrorist groups. Our armed forces have been evacuating and moving to safe accommodation thousands of Syrian civilians who had been besieged from within in the Ghutah. The competent authorities continue to provide food, medicine, health care and social assistance to those people, who suffered for several years under the terrorist yoke.

Using a combination of shells, snipers, threats and misinformation regarding the Syrian army and State, the armed terrorist groups tried desperately to stop those thousands of people from leaving. The fact that they have now left in full view of the media shows that the reports circulated with howls of outrage by certain States were only lies and hypocrisy. The truth became clear when thousands of civilians travelled on foot from the terrorists' areas into the care of the Syrian Arab Army and its allies and supporting forces. The rhetoric that was deployed over the last seven years by the groups and their State sponsors in the region and the West has been shown up.

The Syrian Arab Republic is prepared to provide all of the needs of its citizens, wherever they may be. It also wishes to remind the United Nations and its relief agencies of their responsibilities. If they really care about civilian lives, and if they really want to help, they must send assistance to the areas of Rif Dimashq where the civilians are currently sheltering.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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